LOUDOUN COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 28, 2010 Mickie Gordon, 1st Floor Depot Ct. Leesburg, VA 20176

Committee Members Present:

Paul Popejoy, Sugarland Run, Chairman
Dr. Leslie Sinn DVM, Potomac, Vice Chairman
Donna S. Lewis, At-Large, Recording Secretary
Lila Westwood, Broad Run
Joanne Donohue, Catoctin
Monica Patty, Dulles
Dr. Michael Strickland DVM, Leesburg (arrived 7:10 p.m.)

Committee Members Absent:

Kathy Brice, Blue Ridge Paul Dodaro, Sterling

LCACC Staff Present:

Thomas Koenig, Director Kim Miller, Animal Control Officer Laura Rizer, Public Relations Inga Fricke, Shelter Manager

Public Present:

Mary Harper, Leesburg (arrived after public comment)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Paul Popejoy, at 7:00 p.m. The minutes from the March 24, 2010 meeting were presented. The minutes were adopted as corrected.

Public Comment: None

DIRECTOR UPDATE - Tom Koenig

The two Pet Friendly Trailers have come in and are labeled and fully equipped to set up a Pet Friendly Shelter. A Department van will be replaced with a truck capable of pulling this trailer which weights about eight thousand pounds fully loaded. The current ACO vehicles have hitches and can pull the trailers also. They will be stored at the Fire and Rescue Center in Leesburg. HSUS has requested Mr. Koenig and the Administrative Representative from NVRC present a 90 minute workshop in Nashville Tenn. on the entire process.

Two horses have been surrendered in very bad shape. They have been at the facility for

four weeks. The AOC will be doing a follow up with the owner. The mare has gained 100 pounds in four weeks with normal care.

The budget has been adopted. No further changes from the \$29,000 cuts in operation funds and \$60,000 additional revenue sources.

A serval cat escaped from the Leesburg Animal Park and was hit by a car. It was taken to LTC and then Blue Ridge for treatment. It is now back at the park. The news media and the reverse 911 alerts were used to notify residences within a mile of the park of the situation.

Training and Conference Reports:

Kim Miller – April 12 & 13th - held two day training on how to investigate and prosecute animal cruelty cases. The focus was on gathering evidence and preparing testimony. There were forty-one people in attendance from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and animal control officers from all areas of Virginia.

Three ACO's are currently finishing up their training at the Police Academy.

Inga Fricke – the Department hosted a training session at the Rust Library. Pat Miller, a nationally recognized dog trainer covered animal language and behavior and advanced training techniques. About seventy people from other shelters, training establishments, and veterinary offices attended.

Animal Control – Kim Miller

There were no rabies exposure in March and, therefore, no report. Ms. Patty asked about the owner euthanized listing and, in this instance, the owners had their vet euthanize the animal due to behavior. April is the normal month to see an increase in Animal Control calls but there has not been the usual increase so far.

Public Relations – Laura Rizer

A charity 5K walk was held at Lansdowne Resort last Sunday. Over one hundred people were registered for the walk and \$7,000 was raised as well as a truck load of items for the shelter (blankets, towels, food, etc.).

A new mural is up in the Small Animal hallway done by a Girl Scout Troop as a service project.

Volunteer Activity – Laura Rizer for Amy Seymour

A volunteer orientation will be held this coming Wednesday. Volunteer orientation will now be conducted on a quarterly basis. Ms. Seymour is working on a volunteer survey to be sent out.

NOVC Vet Tech Club will hold a dog wash and clinic on Saturday, May 1st. The Department will offer free micro-chipping and the Loudoun County Veterinary Medical Association will offer reduced rabies vaccine for dogs.

On Sunday June 13th, Paws for Your Heart Dog Walk will be held at the Marion DuPont Scott Equine Medical Center in Leesburg from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Mobil Adoption Vehicle will be there. There are opportunities for volunteers to walk with a shelter dog.

A new program, in conjunction with the Sterling Community Center called the Animal Education Series is starting. It is a monthly program on the 2nd Saturday which will focus on different educational topics: Dogs 101: Behavior and Training; All About Animal Control; Disaster Preparedness for Pet Owners; Preparing Pets for Cold Weather. There will be a \$1.00 registration fee.

Animal Shelter - Inga Fricke

Statistics were presented and Ms Westwood requested information on the euthanized puppy. It was a beagle brought in by an owner that was intolerant of handling and its behavior continued to escalate even after many attempts at remediation.

Dr. Strickland requested a report on the physical plant after the winter storm. The facility faired better than expected. Several downspouts were lost and replaced. There was a lot of tree and fence damage. Power and water were never lost. There is a request in to replace the current generator with a 24 hour one. The heating system has been studied, found in need of replacement, and is in the contract process.

The listing of 140 other animals is representative of a lot of fish, two water turtles (adopted), chickens (adopted), a pig and lamb. The pig and lamb are going to Philomont Ag Day.

Subcommittee Reports

Euthanasia – Ms. Westwood – Ms. Patty

Ms. Westwood and Ms. Patty met to go over the January and February statistic reports. The Departments response to a request from the committee was distributed via e-mail. Ms. Westwood asked questions about the reports, how the information is recorded, remediation efforts, and request for additional evaluation reports. Dr. Sinn requested clarification on how the committee was using this information. Ms. Patty stated that they were looking to see why the animals were being euthanized and possible ways for additional remediation. Dr. Sinn asked if the committee feels the assessments were not adequate. Ms. Patty said that assessments are done universally and are an accepted practice in the field. Dr. Sinn clarified that different tests and authorities have been used to develop the assessment not just Susan Sternberg. She also stated that the correlation between behavior and the results with the adoptive owners is fairly high, about 80%. If

we are agreeing that the assessments are a valid and accepted practice, Dr. Sinn asked what direction the committee was taking. Ms. Patty stated that some of the problems could be solved if there was a remediation program that went along with the assessments. Ms. Lewis stated since they have evaluated the behavioral assessments and come to a basic agreement that a stronger remediation program is necessary, the additional examination and evaluation of statistics is not necessary. Ms. Lewis stated the committee has a pretty good grasp on that is needed and now the focus should be on developing some concrete proactive approaches to establishing a stronger remediation volunteer group and foster homes for long term remediation process. Ms. Westwood stated that the high rate of euthanasia is driving their concerns and that why they are looking into the assessments. Ms. Patty said she had requested information from her contacts in Vermont on the programs they have established to reduce their rates. Ms. Donohue commented on a specific dog on the list to explain how volunteer interaction comes into play in the behavior assessments and how dogs can deteriorate and become unmanageable no matter what intervention is done. Ms. Donohue is confident in the staff and that every possible intervention is made in all categories. Ms. Lewis stated that the pilot remediation volunteer program seems to be working and now the focus should be on expansion of this program so that fewer dogs are failing. Ms. Lewis also pointed out that the focus had been mainly on dogs but cats have just as much, if not more, of a need for reduced euthanasia. Dr. Sinn stated that programs are needed to stop these animals from coming to the shelter in the first place. Ms. Lewis stated that the Department has no say in what comes into the shelter. From in-tickets, we know that many come from terrible situations. We need to look at establishment of outreach programs for breeders or social services for intervention on the front end so pets do not end up coming into the shelter from situations that make them candidates for failure. Dr. Sinn also pointed out that recognition has to be made that the Department is charged with a safety issue for the community and there is also a liability issue in many of these situations. She also stated that the written assessments are just a snap shot in time but more than that one paper goes into the decision, including staff interaction, history of the dog when brought in, and volunteer reports on remediation work. Dr. Sinn stated that since we are in agreement that the assessments are a tool that is being applied accurately, we have to follow through with proactive programs or out reaches and/or setting up programs to intervene when we have boarder line animals. Mr. Popejoy also stated that having controlled environment conditions for the adoption is another tool to ensure a successful adoption. Ms. Donohue commented that the new education series is a perfect venue for outreach and training for pet owners so they know behaviors can be modified. Both Dr. Sinn and Ms. Donohue pointed out that statistics are squed because of the animals that come in. Mr. Popejoy pointed out the committee title is "reducing euthanasia rates" and now the committee should put their recommendations into writing. Proposed suggestions could include increase volunteers doing remediation work. Additional proposals could include recommendations Ms. Patty has received from other shelters for programs that have been successful.

Public Visibility -

Dr. Sinn reported on the events that have already been reported on (NOVA May 1st, 5K

Walk, Educational Series, Paws for Your Heart Walk). The mobile adoption vehicle has been an important element is increased public visibility. It is becoming a main stay at Petco. People are coming for the Adoption Van not just to shop. Dr. Strickland asked about showcasing other animals available for adoption but not on the van. Ms. Rizer stated that they are up on the web site and a digital photo frame for the van is in the works. Dr. Strickland suggested a co-operation between trainers and the Department. This is the goal behind the education series and discussion was held as to the expansion of this program for the future and the need to make links between public needs and outreach programs between clubs and business establishment's public service actions.

Increasing Volunteers – none

Laws and Ordinances –

Tethering Ordinance –discussion of wording, definitions and enforcement ability was held. Officer Miller pointed out that this ordinance would be another mechanism to make the animal more part of the family and reduce aggression rates. Lines 8 and 9 are confusing. If there is alternate wording requested, please submit suggestions.

Mr. Koenig stated that the nuisance ordinance will be taken forward to the Finance and Government Committee in an item. A list of the other items the committee is planning to work on will be included. In developing any new or revised policy, the first question to be asked is: What problem are we trying to resolve and why is it a problem? In addition: Who and how is the enforcement going to work? What will be the penalty for noncompliance? How did you arrive with the penalty? The supporting body of work used in creating an item should accompany it. Mr. Popejoy will represent the Committee at the Finance and Government Committee

Animals in Emergency – Mr. Popejoy - None

Reduce Cost and Improve Efficiency – None

Unfinished Business - None

New Business

Subcommittee appointments –

<u>Reduced Cost and Improve Efficiency</u> –motion to remove (Strickland) & second (Patty). Discussion held. Vote: 7-0-2 - Passes

Mr. Koenig stated that the leadership team has raised an issue of FOIA and subcommittees. In the past, we had been advised if there were two or less members it did not constitute a meeting and you did not have to follow FOIA rules. A memo will be coming from the County Attorney stating that any meeting regardless of the number of members will fall under FOIA because you are conducting County business. This means that any work is subject to FOIA, times and locations must be posted, and, therefore, the

sub-committees can have more than two members. This memo will be distributed via e-mail.

<u>Increasing Volunteers</u> – motion (Lewis) & second (Donohue) to merge the Increasing Volunteers and Public Visibility committees and rename it Community Outreach. Vote 7-0-2 – Passed

Dr. Strickland requested to be on the Animals in Emergency.

808 Ordinance

Ms. Lewis requested Ms. Donohue work with her and Officer Miller to bring Ordinance #808 into compliance with the changes that have been made to Virginia Code. Ms. Donohue agreed. A change in fees for #808 is already in the works.

If you want to be on a specific committee, please send Mr. Popejoy an e-mail.

Committee Member Informational Reports

At Large – Ms. Donna Lewis – none

Blue Ridge - Ms. Kathy Brice - absent

Broad Run – **Ms. Lila Westwood** – Requested the results of HB281. It was thrown out because it was ruled not germane to the original bill (tougher penalties for cruelty).

Catoctin – Ms. Joanne Dekker Donohue – Attended the 5K walk and she encourages everyone to go out and support the special events.

Dulles – Ms. Monica Patty - none

Leesburg – Dr. Mike Strickland, D.V.M. – Paws 4 Your Heart – June 13th 10:00 a.m. Posters have been sent to all vets. Any additional help in getting the word out would be appreciated. \$20 registration. Groups of 5 would be \$15 each.

Potomac – Dr. Leslie Sinn, D.V.M. – NOVA event this Saturday – Dog Wash, Microchipping, rabies clinic.

Sterling - Mr. Paul Dodaro - absent

Sugarland Run – Mr. Paul Popejoy – presented Ms. Rizer the \$7,000 check from the Lansdowne 5K event.

Adjournment 9:10 p.m.

Next meeting, Wednesday, May 26, 2010